



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

## Outcomes Report: 2017 Dublin City Infrastructure Summit



(From R-L) 1 Senator Neale Richmond, Dr. Ronan Lyons TCD, Ms. Mary Rose Burke Dublin Chamber, Prof. John Fitzgerald TCD & Cllr. Paul McAuliffe Dublin City Council

Chaired by Councillor Paul McAuliffe of the Economic Development, Enterprise and International Relations, Strategic Policy Committee & hosted by the Economic Development Office of Dublin City Council

**Council Chambers,  
Dublin City Hall  
May 23, 2017**

**Contents:**

<b>Dublin City Infrastructure Summit: Key Outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Welcome:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction &amp; Context:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter One: Cataloguing the Challenges</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter Two: Housing and Competitiveness</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Movement and Transport</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Chapter Four: Delivering Infrastructure</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Contributors:</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Photos of attendees:</b>	<a href="#">Error! Bookmark not defined.</a>

## Dublin City Infrastructure Summit: Key Outcomes

### Mr. Greg Swift, Head of Enterprise & Economic Development.

Against a back drop of rapidly improving economic conditions, Dublin City continues to show signs of recovery from the financial crisis of 2008. GDP for 2016 stood at 5.2% We have one of the best performing economies in the Euro Zone and unemployment is forecast to reduce below 7% by the end of 2017. Dublin now accounts for 45% of national GDP while the greater Dublin region accounts for 54%. It is clear that Dublin is the economic engine of Ireland. However, while the recovery is very positive, a number of legacy issues remain to be addressed and these pose a significant threat to our ability to compete internationally to attract the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), high quality jobs and enterprise that enrich the fabric of our city.

The role of high quality infrastructure is a critical element of a modern economy. It supports the ecosystem which allows sustainable economic development and promotes enhanced efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. It is this sustainable development which makes cities attractive places to live, work, visit and invest, and it strengthens social cohesion by providing vital facilities to the residents of the City. The last decade has seen a significant underinvestment in infrastructure by the State, as the full impact of the financial crisis became apparent and austerity measures took hold. This has resulted in particularly challenging conditions across a range of key projects, markets and sectors.

**“It is clear that Dublin is the economic engine of Ireland.”**

Nowhere are these pressures more apparent than in the housing sector as working families struggle to find affordable homes in the city. In his presentation to the summit, Dr. Lyons of TCD highlighted that housing can be considered as representing a quarter of Dublin City’s competitiveness and that we need to build in the region of 25,000 homes each year to meet demand and reduce the cost of homes. He also highlighted the changing demographics of the demand component as a larger number of 1-and 2-person dwellings will be required, and that this will need to be predominantly met by the construction of apartments. Resolving this issue is critical to maintaining Dublin’s competitiveness internationally.

In response to these pressures, Dublin City Council has committed nearly €800m for housing & building between 2017 & 2019, while the State has committed spending of at least €3b nationally under its capital investment programme from 2016 to 2021. This represents a significant scaling up on investment from previous years but it is still considerably lower than the 2008 peak spending levels.

The summit also focused on other areas where infrastructure was critical (such as transport, Energy & Smart Cities) and the challenges of delivering these projects. Dublin City Council have made a key contribution in the delivery of a number of large projects which will enhance quality of life in the city for citizens and business, such as the LUAS Cross City Project, Dublin waste2energy plant, the Poolbeg and Docklands Strategic Development Zones and delivered a number of rapid build housing units.

The **key outcomes** emerging from the summit include;

- **Reinforcing Infrastructure** is the key to ensuring that Dublin City remains competitive and **resilient to external shocks** such as BREXIT.
- **Dublin is the national economic engine** and supports regional and rural development; as such, **investment in the City's Infrastructure must be maintained**.
- **Greater collaboration** between local authorities and public bodies is required, particularly in the delivery and planning of Infrastructure.
- **Affordability and accessibility of Housing** is again highlighted as significant challenges facing the City.
- **A register of vacant sites, buildings and properties** would be beneficial and assist in improving policy making and planning decisions.
- **Building costs** in Ireland are higher than other European countries. The underlying reasons need to be independently identified.
- **A cultural change** is required as we encourage families to adapt to **apartment living** in cities and to make greater use of public transport.
- Concern over **retention of talent**, where citizens have to commute long distances, is a significant challenge for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- **Transport infrastructure is a pressing need** and, while plans are in progress for the Metro North and DART expansion, delivery of these projects may take a decade.

- Smart Cities and Internet of Things ( IOT) could provide increased data on which to **improve our evidence based** decision making.
- **Harnessing and valuing underused infrastructure**, such as waterways, could offer a new blueprint for cities and towns across Ireland.
- **Longer term planning** was called for, with a focus on quality and monitoring.

The purpose of the Dublin City Infrastructure Summit was for the City Council to build on its leadership role in convening policy makers and stakeholders for the City, bringing them together in a collaborative forum and identifying opportunities and threats facing our City. I was delighted with the attendance and participation of a very diverse group of highly engaged and passionate individuals and organisations. We made many new connections on the day and strengthened existing relationships.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in the Summit, and in particular the key contributors, including; Ms. Mary Rose Burke CEO, Dublin Chamber and Senator Neale Richmond, Chairman, Seanad BREXIT Committee, Professor John Fitzgerald and Dr. Ronan Lyons, Department of Economics, Trinity College Dublin and Professor Deiric O’Brion CEO of NorDubCo and lecturer in Dublin City University. I would also like to thanks the Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr Rebecca Moynihan for her support and the representatives of the elected members of Dublin City Council, as well as a number of the executive management team. Contributions to the summit were also made by a range of stakeholders including the National Transport Authority, Waterways Ireland, CODEMA, JC Decaux, NESC, the Construction federation of Ireland, Irish Water, IBEC, DKM, Connect Centre TCD, Dublin Port and Dublin Airport.

I would also like to thank Ms. Barbara Clinton for her transcription of the Summit and particularly my team in the Economic Development Office for their efforts in preparing the Summit and also this outcomes report.



Greg Swift  
Head of Enterprise & Economic Development  
Dublin City Council

## Welcome:



Photo 1: Cllr. Paul McAuliffe welcomes attendees to the Dublin City Infrastructure Summit

**Cllr Paul McAuliffe, Fianna Fail**, during his opening address to welcome those attending the Dublin City Infrastructure Summit, pointed out that the summit was the second to be hosted by the Economic Development, Enterprise and International Relations Strategic Policy Committee of Dublin City Council. In June 2016, within weeks of the BREXIT referendum, the committee hosted the Dublin BREXIT Summit. Cllr McAuliffe said among the issues that had arisen during that summit were those of growth and contraction and the ability of Dublin City and the greater Dublin region to respond to the opportunities and challenges of BREXIT.

Also, infrastructure as one of the key issues identified, as were opportunities and challenges presented by an increasing population, the need for more office space residential accommodation, a transport system that allowed people to move around the city efficiently, as well as appropriate educational services. Many pre-existing issues were brought into sharper focus by the BREXIT decision, he said. And many of these concerned the city's infrastructure, giving rise to the Infrastructure Summit – a round table event addressed by a number of key contributors with expertise in the areas of policy, transport, housing, accommodation and planning.

## Introduction & Context:



Photo 2: Prof. John Fitzgerald of Trinity College Dublin briefs the summit on the challenges facing infrastructure in Dublin City

**Professor John Fitzgerald, Department of Economics, Trinity College, Dublin,** introduced a number of themes in his address to the summit. He said it was necessary to consider what type of development was needed for Dublin. Successful cities were places where people wanted to live. A review of the last decade seemed to indicate that everybody wanted jobs only found in cities but wanted to live in bungalows in rural areas.

That was an *“utterly unsustainable model”*, Professor Fitzgerald said. Denser development was needed for Dublin, and that was particularly true in consideration of climate change because commuting had very negative environmental effects. Having people living close to where they work was important, he added. *“A younger generation wants to live closer to work in a denser city, in apartments. Changing preferences are important,”* he commented.

**“Successful cities are places where people wanted to live.”**

Professor Fitzgerald also addressed the impact of past economic uncertainty on Dublin's ability to meet current challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, he said that during the previous [boom] decade people seemed to believe things were going to go on like they were forever. *"We saw the disastrous effects of that".* And then in the period 2011 to 2013 there was profound pessimism and people thought things would be the same as they were then, he said. *"And that is when we missed the opportunity – it was clear from 2012 when the recovery turned the corner that we were going to need 25,000 dwellings a year over the following 20 years given the demographics. People didn't believe Ireland had a future and nothing was done".*

Brexit was a source of huge uncertainty into the future, he said. However, even in the absence of Brexit, what he termed a *"no-regrets"* policy should be adapted in planning for Dublin's future. *"In 2007, I met Fingal County Council who were, I think, the most progressive in terms of the Dublin local authorities at the time. They*

***"We missed the opportunity of taking action three years earlier, which might have put us in a better position today."***

*planned for Metro North – they planned around a dense development based around public transport; and then, of course, Metro North didn't happen."*

Relocation of some businesses from London to Dublin would mean a positive initial impact of Brexit on the capital. However, a major constraint was that *"today we don't have the infrastructure – public or private – to support a major expansion in the city. Certainly for Ireland, on balance, there are likely to be*

*negative effects but who can tell? It is difficult planning for a future where at the moment it seems the economy will continue to grow and you are going to need a lot more infrastructure – public and private – in the future."*

In considering investment priorities, Professor Fitzgerald said, the market failure had to be identified and a decision needed to be made about whether the State should be involved, and how the State should use its scarce resources. *"In terms of the current problems, it looks to me as if yes, there is a major role for the State."* He said one role for the State was in the area of regulation. *"From what I can see at the moment the major problem is the supply constraint on delivering housing and this body, Dublin City Council, is one of the problems."*



*“The Government could abolish Dublin City Council and take over the regulation to deal with some of the problems but the fact is that you have failed, and Dun Laoghaire has failed, to deal with some of the regulatory problems that it is in your hands to deal with. “So supply constraints you can deal with – you can make a difference through delivering a much denser city through development in suitable areas or whatever. That is something you can deliver and it does not need money; it needs regulatory change.”*

Turning his attention to the cost of accommodation in Dublin, Professor Fitzgerald focused on the cost of land. *“Because as an economist, ultimately, when there is major pressure on the market I ask where the benefit lies. It lies with the owner of the land.”* He said one route was through the taxation system and property taxes. *“Once again this authority and Dun Laoghaire have decided to reduce property taxes below where they should be.”* He said that a property tax would have been the way to go in order to release more resources to infrastructure.

He told Dublin City Council representatives: *“A lot of it is in your hands. I was asked the question before: should Government use money to pay down debt or invest in infrastructure? You can do both. It is not an either or. We found in the last decade that trying to deliver too much infrastructure, too rapidly can lead to constraints. We are not facing that at the moment.”*

Returning to Metro North, Professor Fitzgerald said the Government had said it would go ahead with the rail project. However, he said that having built the Green Line extension, it was necessary to consider if the location for Metro North was still correct. *“You need to re-optimize based on what you know today.”* He said that the issue of how to finance such projects went back to a trade off between debt reduction and government investment. *“The Government has scarce resources; it is a question of where it targets it and where the market failure is.”*

***“How do you develop infrastructure for a dense city that will be good to live in? That is the challenge. “***

Professor Fitzgerald said, that, in the long term, housing was something that could be provided by the private sector if the *“regulations are right”*. However, he highlighted the finding of a recent report that the banking and financial sector would not be able to continue to finance the needed 30,000 plus dwellings a year after 2020, *“without making the mistakes of the past”*. A larger rental sector would be required in the long term, he said, provided by commercial investment. *“We need what are referred to as vulture funds, professional investors; we need investment in rental accommodation in the longer term.”*

While the banking sector could provide finance for housing today, the problem was in delivering that housing, he said. *“In terms of delivery times, it is interesting that infrastructure takes a long time in Ireland.”* The planning process and the extent to which delivering residential accommodation could be held at various stages *“is a major problem when we are facing major constraints. That is going to be an issue for the future. How we finance it. In terms of social housing, I think we need to look at models that may take it off the State’s balance sheet. I think it is possible to do so. But you need to think about what you are doing.”*

***“I find it ironic to see the United Kingdom upset about possibly paying 60 billion to the European Union, whereas two years ago 60 billion was added on to the British national debt by the Conservative government because they started interfering with the provision of social housing, which put it back on the balance sheet. Nobody got excited about that 60 billion but they are pretty excited about this 60 billion”.***

He said there were ways of providing social housing *“but you have to tie your hands as a State and you have to look at a new model”*. There are ways that social housing could be delivered in the future which would ease the pressures on the Government and allow a more rapid rollout, he concluded.

## Chapter One: Cataloguing the Challenges



Photo 3: Ms. Mary Rose-Burke, CEO Dublin Chamber of Commerce outlines the challenges facing infrastructure for Dublin City

**Mary Rose Burke, Chief Executive Officer of Dublin Chamber**, an organisation that represents business and investment in the capital, congratulated Dublin City Council on, what she said was, “*a very timely infrastructure summit.*” She said there was a sense of urgency around infrastructure in the business community and she said it was heartening to know the issues were now getting much-needed political attention, at local and national level.

**“Infrastructure is the most pressing issue facing the region and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.”**

Dublin Chamber of Commerce represents 1,300 members in the greater Dublin area and its members employ about 300,000 people, she said. “*We have a very clear insight across different sectors and different sizes of business, about the infrastructure challenges the businesses face.*”

*“Historically, we have never got this right; we have underinvested. We have a very unstable capital expenditure pattern – the worst in Western Europe and the lowest proportional capital spend in the European Union. We haven’t been great in the past at some of our projections; we have tended to underestimate the future needs and failed to provide for those.”*

Population growth had been underestimated and there was a failure to meet the needs of even that underestimated population. Less than 20 per cent of people in the greater Dublin area used public transport for their commute to work, not because they choose not to use it but because it was not provided in a way that met their needs, she said. (according to a canal cordon count 2016, 48.5% of people crossing the Grand canal at peak hours travelled by public transport -30% travelled by car.)

***“From a political point of view, the capital would appear to lack a very coherent voice. TDs and representatives from other counties, for example Mayo, can be counted on to put aside their political differences and project a strong voice for their own region when they are lobbying on national policy. Dublin representatives seem to lack either that confidence or projection or unity in making the case for the city, so we don’t see a strong defence. There is almost an apology for being Dublin-centric and a lack of recognition of the importance of Dublin. If Dublin does not succeed, the country cannot succeed.”***

Dublin did not get a proportionate share of infrastructure, she said. Per capita investment in Dublin stood at around two-thirds the national average based on the most up to date available figures. According to Central Statistic Office projections, 300,000 more people would live in the four Dublin local authority areas by 2031: *“Where will they live and work, and how will they get from work to home, and how will they get around taking part in other social, cultural and family life events in Dublin?”*

Housing supply was now a critical issue facing the economy, with housing rents surpassing the peak levels of 2008. *“Unusually, but not surprisingly, housing is now the biggest issue that our members face. That is the biggest issue that their employees are coming to them with – both the access to housing and the affordability of housing.”*

In meeting the challenges and opportunities provided by Brexit, she said, housing supply, commuting and travel times were the most practical and quantifiable measures that local authorities could deal with. *“That would make the city more competitive both for the people already living and working here but also in being able to attract in new investment. We would like to see tangible progress across those areas.”* A recent Department of Transport response to a Parliamentary question estimated the annual cost of congestion to the Irish economy at €350 million, which was projected to rise to about €2 billion by 2030. Dublin was ranked as the seventh most congested city in Europe.

Dublin Chamber saw Metro North as critical infrastructure, she said. *“Dublin Airport is critical to the connectivity of the entire country – 80 per cent of overseas visitors to the country come in through the airport – it is in effect Ireland’s airport.”* Rapid efficient connectivity into the city centre and the rest of the public infrastructure for the country needs to be developed. *“But it is also needed to ease congestion for the people, particularly in the Fingal area, to help them have a good quality of life and to reduce commuting times there.”*

**“A very ambitious plan is needed to provide quality bus corridors and integrated bus routes around the city so that people could choose to use them.”**

She said DART Underground was probably a striking example of that short-termism, *“where we don’t plan properly for the future”*. She said it was first proposed in 1971 and in spite of multiple plans, postponements and revisions; its construction had not begun. She said Dublin Chamber saw DART Underground as a piece of national infrastructure that would connect the rail system that connected towns and cities, such as Tralee to Dundalk and Sligo to Rosslare. Even if Metro North or DART Underground were to get the go ahead, she said Dublin was facing a decade of increased congestion in lengthening commuter times and more people in the city.

She said those improvements were necessary in the short term and should be developed *“fairly rapidly to provide a solution within the decade Metro North would take to provide”*. This should include an upgrade of ticketing and payment systems, improved walking and cycling options in the city, and co-location of complementary services to *“enhance the experience of living and working in the city”*. She said only two counties outside the Dublin area – Cork and Kilkenny – contributed more to the public Exchequer than they received. She said the wellbeing of rural Ireland depended on the success of Dublin. *“That is not a message that is widely understood across the country.*

Dublin-based politicians should be *“really bold and ambitious in making the case for Dublin. The greater Dublin area is home to 40 per cent of the population, it is the engine of the economy with 53 per cent of GDP and it generates about 62 per cent of tax revenue. We should be louder and prouder about the case for investment in Dublin. People want the quality of jobs that can only be provided in a major urban environment. We need to respect and reflect that in the way we allocate funds for housing and for other critical infrastructure.”*

**“For rural Ireland to have a future and to be supported, it needs the economic engine that is Dublin to deliver to the Exchequer to support it.”**

Ms Burke also called for a move away from short-term planning to 20 to 30 year planning *“so that people can see a clear line of sight for big capital infrastructure. We need to be able to scale up. Six-year time frames are just not good enough when planning the infrastructure takes 10 years. We would like to see that 20-year capital investment plan aligned with other national strategies and supported with long-term commitment so that economic cycles do not derail that building of the future.”*

**Mr. Tom Parlon, Chief Executive Officer of the Construction Industry Federation**, said Dublin needed to be benchmarked against other global cities with regard to attracting investment, finance, technology and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Brexit might bring opportunities, he said, but it was going to be a *“long, long game”* and there were uncertainties. One of the challenges was the very basic requirement of accommodation.

The IDA and several global companies had reported their concerns about housing. *“You can be sure our competitors out there are amplifying these concerns in the battle for FDI”*, he said. *“We have to address that.”* Existing fiscal rules in the EU were restricting investment.

*“Getting some flexibility in terms of our fiscal space has to be a key element from Brussels in terms of how we go forward. I understand Italy and Lithuania have substantially more flexibility than Ireland and are investing in their infrastructure currently.”* He called for the establishment of an independent commission on infrastructure, and for the *“increased and appropriate use of Public Private Partnerships to deliver projects”*.

Dublin was now ranked ninth place in the world for congestion, commuter times were back at Celtic Tiger levels, and rents back at 2007 level and *“we have the housing infrastructure issues”*. Dublin was now the eighth most expensive city for construction costs, he said, adding that there were a number of reasons for this, including the cost of insurance, regulation, availability of finance and legal expenses. Referring to a recent report that one of the biggest financiers had sold off their office portfolio in Dublin signalling, he said, that office investment was at its peak - *“They are concentrating on the residential side,.”* He said.

***“We know that people working in Facebook and Google want to live close to work. They want to live in apartments, and to be able to walk to and from work.”***

For builders, bank-lending rules remained very restrictive and it was an issue for a builder to find working capital to build residential property. He said one of the biggest issues was in relation to apartment building. However, it was currently “*practically unviable*” to build apartment blocks. *“It is difficult to get finance. There is no speculative finance unless your apartment block is let or fully sold in advance.”*

Regulations were a major factor in that regard, he said, in relation to underground car parking, height and other restrictions. *“There are great opportunities and great potential within Dublin but we need to have a shared strategy” that included the regions, he said, pointing to skilled construction workers having to travel long distances to and from work in Dublin because accommodation in the city was too expensive to allow those workers to stay for the duration of the projects they were working on.”*

**Mr. Aidan Sweeney, Senior Policy Executive, IBEC**, told the summit that in 2010 Dublin was the 26<sup>th</sup> most liveable city in the world but had now fallen to 34<sup>th</sup> place. The problems were not just about wages and tax, but also about a “*bundle of issues, including quality of life scenarios*”. He said that, on average, commuters spend 190 additional hours in traffic each year, while compared to other countries, Ireland was under-urbanised.

Agreeing with a number of other contributors, Mr Sweeney said: *“We lack a coherent plan for our cities.”* He said that while there was a rural strategy, no such strategy existed for Dublin or other cities. It was clear from the Dublin Development plan that focusing just on the Dublin City Council area was not sufficient. *“We saw that in the incoherent approach across the four local authorities”* and how they approached a number of issues.

**“The absence of strategic planning is affecting our ability to win investment, and ensure we can attract and retain staff.”**

He said a strategy that would address issues like height and density, and infrastructure, was needed. *“Who lobbies on behalf of the greater Dublin region – not just from a constituency base or a local base? Who will say projects like Dart Underground is not just a Dublin City issue because it has an underlying impact on*



*the electrification of the Maynooth rail line, for example, and in opening up excess capacity at Heuston train station for other users. All roads lead to Dublin and we need to take some of the pressure off". The affordability and availability of housing was a key concern as well as how people commute. He said Dublin City did some things very well, citing the broadband service. "Businesses are coming here because of that and the question now is how do we bring it to the next level?"*

**Senator Neal Richmond, chairman of the Seanad Brexit Committee,** told the summit that whatever happened, Brexit would not be good for Ireland. *"It will be a disaster, so how do we plan for it?"*

***"I know it is a private investment and very expensive but large multinationals and EU agencies won't move their staff to Ireland or Dublin if they cannot educate their kids in the manner they want to, and are able to in Brussels or London or Geneva or wherever."***

He said educational requirements were a strategic issue that needed to be dealt with. *"An international school will open in Leopardstown in September 2018, with 800 places for children aged five to 18 years. We need the roll out of, at least, another three campuses in the greater Dublin region."*

**“How do we retain the staff we have as well as winning new business?”**

In relation to capital investment, Senator Richmond said there was a proposal to alter and reduce the 10-year capital plan to change the debt to GDP ratio from a 45 per cent rate to a 55 per cent rate. *"That is allowed under the current fiscal rules, and is something we can start on straight away after the next budget."* He said it was vital to see some large-scale investment but the return on the investment also needed to be considered. *"Is it solely an economic return; is it a social return or an environmental return; what return are we looking for? We need large ticket, long term investment – the obvious one is Metro North."*

He said the decision to link the LUAS lines had used the available funds. Neither Dublin City nor Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Councils were being ambitious enough in their capital development plans. He said it was necessary to look beyond local elections and “nimbyism” to deal with “*the greatest challenge the State has faced since the Second World War*”.

**Councillor Ciaran Cuffe, Green Party,** said density was a more important consideration than building height and a key issue was to increase density. “*The current development plan allows for much greater density in our suburbs, which I think is crucial for our development as we develop quality public transport linking the city centre with our suburbs.*” Red tape and bureaucracy around housing was complicated, he said, referring to delays in starting housing on North King Street in the city centre, due to having to refer to the Department of Housing on four separate occasions over two years. “*It will take another two years before it is built. That is a minimum of four years from start to finish for local authority housing in a housing crisis.*”

***“We’d love to have all the big sticker projects like Metro North and DART Underground but, I think, buses are the real people movers. Forty per cent of those who come to shop in Dublin city centre come by bus and only 20 per cent by car. We have got to improve connectivity for our buses and all public transport.”***

As a local authority, he said, Dublin City Council did not have the autonomy to either borrow money or build “*without going back to Mammy or Daddy four separate times*”, and that took time and helped perpetuate or exacerbate the crisis, he added.

He said transport would become a much bigger issue over the months and years ahead, and that was “*why we need a very strong momentum from [Transport] Minister [Shane] Ross or his successor to press ahead with investment in quality public transport. He said the massive investment in bus improvements being proposed by the National Transport Authority was crucial*”

He said leadership and a co-ordinated voice for Dublin were needed. *“I think we would all agree that better co-ordination was needed between the four local authorities in Dublin, and in Kildare, Meath and Wicklow to where the remit of the functional economic area of Dublin extends.”* He said countries even smaller than Ireland devolved a lot more power to their local authorities, allowing the councils to respond much more quickly to crises.

**Councillor Dermot Lacey, Labour Party**, echoed the concerns of other speakers and said: Referring to an earlier criticism of Dublin City Council’s decision to reduce the residential property tax, he said: *“I didn’t vote for the 15 per cent reduction in property tax but part of the problem is if we raise money in other ways, the Department [of the Environment] will take it back so there is no incentive for councillors to be more responsible.”*

## **“We don’t stand up for Dublin.”**

*The central and core problem facing Dublin and decision making is the destructive but very powerful role of the Department of the Environment. It is the most dysfunctional and destructive institutional force in Irish society. We have to break the power of the department if we are to seriously challenge for Dublin.”*

Again taking up the point made by Cllr. Cuffe, he said there was an 18-unit housing proposal for Donnybrook before the Department of the Environment for 18 years. *“It got planning permission, there are no objections to it, and yet it is still winding its way through the stages of the Department...that bureaucratic inertia has to be broken.”*

On housing, he said that the *“more we go for higher density and high rise the more there is resentment in the local community because they cannot afford any of those housing units. We have to find a better way than the 10 per cent social and the 10 per cent affordable to deal with that.”*

As many as 44 bodies had responsibility for traffic in Dublin, he said. *“No wonder we cannot get anything done. We need a single Dublin transportation authority that is accountable because, with all due respect to the National Transport Authority, it is not accountable in any real sense to the woman standing at the bus stop.”* He said it

was not possible to run the region with four mayors, 180 councillors and four chief executives – *“You do need a directly elected mayor and a single regional authority.”*

**Lorraine Higgins, Head of Public Affairs and Communication, Retail Excellence Ireland**, said Brexit was having a detrimental effect on its members. She said housing accessibility and affordability were key issues, and that a number of retailers had complained of problems in retaining staff as a result.

**“Employees are looking for other cities to locate to because of the challenge of getting affordable accommodation.”**

She said there was a general housing need in Dublin but also an acute need for accommodation for those working in the corporate sector. *“This needs to be sorted out as soon as possible because it threatens the essence of our FDI.”* She said a lack of clear timelines for An Bord Pleanála decisions also caused problems. Retail Excellence members were also complaining about transport issues and reduced footfall by tourists in the city centre.

Coach operators were experiencing problems with parking and enforcement of parking regulations. *“This is having a corresponding impact of traffic congestion in the city because they are forced to drive around and around because of the absence of sufficient parking spaces. Hopefully, with the long stay coach parking that might alleviate this problem in the longer term.”*

She said it was important for Dublin to assert itself during the negotiation of the European Union Trans European Network Funding for transport talks, due by 2020.

***“Based on the fact that we have a critical mass of population here to make sure we get a good tranche of that funding down the line and we need to have that dialogue with our MEPs and others.”***

## Chapter Two: Housing and Competitiveness



Photo 4: Dr. Ronan Lyons Assistant Professor Department of Economics TCD being interviewed by Mr. Jimmy Greeley.

**Dr Ronan Lyons, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, Trinity College Dublin**, in introducing the topic, said housing accounted for a quarter of a city's competitiveness. He said three quarters of the cost base of a modern FDI project was labour, and that labour could not reasonably spend more than a third of its income on housing.

***“Now that we have a world where capital is chasing skilled labour, capital wants to be where the skilled labour wants to be. Where the skilled labour wants to be is the billion-dollar question.”***

Unfortunately, in Ireland's case we were so good at attracting FDI there was a delineation of what were, domestic issues and what were international. Corporate tax got a lot of focus because that was a key lever in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. *“It is still a key lever but when you are dealing, not with manufacturing firms, but with services, where all of their costs are local, housing is much more important.”*

Dr Lyons said the greater Dublin area was adding three people per hour, and that increase was not being met with a house an hour. The scale of the housing need, nationally, he put close to 50,000 a year, with about 17,000 of those homes needed in the greater Dublin area.

In the six years from January 2011 to December 2016, 21,000 homes were started nationally – the equivalent of what was needed for one year. On the other hand, about 3.7 million square metres of office space were added in the same time. That

sector, which he said was peaking, was going to increase by about a quarter in approximately five years. He said hotels would experience the same level of increase, as would student accommodation, *“if allowed”*.

**“We have an empty nester problem and they have nothing to move into. Nothing has been built for them.”**

*“That is not going to happen with apartments”, because of the cost of building. Household size had increased between the 2011 census and 2016. “This is not supposed to happen – we are supposed to be on a long-term journey away from four or more people in the average household to two or two-and-a-half. It’s not going up because we have a baby boom; it is going up because we have people in what are called unrelated household units. We are cramming more and more people into the same number of units.” Ireland was increasingly an urban country “but one that likes to think of itself as rural. If you*

*have a one off house it is subsidised by everyone else. Not everyone can do that. Dublin is paying the way for most of the rest of the country. Until that is recognised and elucidated people won’t know this and therefore it won’t be factored into decision making at a national level.”*

Going through some of the fine detail on housing and residential accommodation, Dr Lyons said there were 250,000 households of one or two people in Dublin but only 125,000 units that would suit a one- or two-person household. *“So that means a number of one or two-person households are living in far larger homes.”*

On the flip side, he said, Dublin did not need more family homes because there were 150,000 households of three and four people, and about 180,000 dwellings that would fit three or four people. *“There is a surplus of family homes, but we don’t have options for pretty much every other type of accommodation.”* Dublin would need about 30,000 units of student accommodation in the next six years. *“And when you don’t build them, students will price low income families out of accommodation.”*

He said it cost about 50% more to build a square metre of apartment space in Dublin compared to its peer cities. *“How much [of this] is [due to] an inefficient market in concrete, or bricklayers, or the cost of finance? We need to find out why Dublin is 50% more expensive than its peers, when it comes to building the kind of accommodation that we desperately need as a city?”*

Dublin needed a large quantity of apartments, but *“that is the one thing that is not being built. When you look back, that scale and type of need is not being met; it is unsurprising to see rents in the city are up by 75 per cent in six years. Cost is up, availability is down, and now Dublin features on all the wrong sorts of lists.”* He said in a recent survey of expatriates, Ireland featured in the bottom five on housing affordability and availability.

**Reducing the number of vacant properties could meet two years of demand for accommodation.**

He said there was not enough accommodation, which resulted in highly qualified people who relocated to Ireland having to commute from as far outside the city as Westmeath. *“Those people are not going to stay and after they have done their two years that looks okay on the CV when they leave. We risk losing those projects as well. Availability and affordability are the key pressure points now in terms of competitiveness in the housing market.”*

*“The good news is that a lot of the levers to fix this are, at least partly within the remit of the local authorities.”* However, he said the mortgage market and credit conditions were *“completely outside the control of the local authorities. That is decided by the*

*Central Bank but everything else – vacancy, cost, social housing and land – are all things where the Council can have an effect.”*

Turning his attention to vacant properties, he said this was an issue that, if tackled, could probably result in a “*quick win*”. The level of vacancy in Dublin at 10 per cent of housing stock was double that for other comparable cities.

## **The single most important issue with building is the cost of construction.**

In the absence of a property register and a property tax “*we won’t be able to tackle these things.*” he said. “And you need to start building.” An exercise by the Department of Housing on construction costs that was due to be completed in March of this year had yet to be completed, he said. “*The local authorities need to have an opinion on why construction costs are so expensive.*”

He said providing social housing at 10 per cent of what the market built was not the correct approach because “*the market is not going to provide enough housing when there is high unemployment*”. He said counter-cyclical social housing was needed that would be paid for “*by everyone not just the people who buy or inhabit newly built properties. So we need to move to a system of universal housing subsidies rather than rent subsidies*”. The Housing Assistance Payment was half a plus and a step in the right direction in this regard, he said. He said the council had some control over the introduction of a land value tax that would get infrastructure funded. If Metro North increased housing supply by bringing about viable new areas that should create the revenue that pays for the rail system, allowing the council to borrow against a future land value tax.

The solutions were not difficult; the difficulty was how to implement them. “*For those of you involved in decision-making, we know what the solutions are, the difficult bit is how to get those over the line and convince people who are sceptical, including other stakeholders. There is lots of good research done on density, on transport, and indeed on taxation.*” He suggested local authorities needed annual targets by property type. “*The scale of the need is absolutely phenomenal. We need to get our act together.*”



**Anthony Flynn, Executive Manager, Housing and Community Section, Dublin City Council**, said the council's portfolio of 25,000 properties, which had a rental income of €75 million, could be used to fund infrastructure, off balance sheet. He said the council funded housing in a number of ways – through assistance given to approved housing bodies and private landlords, including through HAP. He agreed that the process for PPPs needed to be streamlined and made simpler. *“I feel the cost of construction is the most important thing we have to deal with, because construction is linked to affordability. The issue of affordable rent is very important”*, he said referring to earlier comments that people should expect to spend 30 per cent of their income on accommodation.

He said on a *“net monthly basis”* somebody earning up to €48,000 should therefore spend about a €1,000 a month. *“A two-bedroom unit was far in excess of that”*. He said there were a number of council initiatives attempting to deal with the issue of vacant houses, many of which needed significant repairs. *“The [funding] scheme that is working for the city is the buy and renew scheme rather than the repair and lease scheme.”* A key issue in planning housing stock was whether to build public or private housing. Under-occupancy was also an issue the council had to deal with, and providing housing stock that would allow people to downsize. *“We are bringing forward pilot projects testing initiatives to allow people to live with supports and assistance and we are bringing forward pilot projects in relation to that.”*

He said the council was being very clear in relation to very large recent tenders it received for many of its projects, construction costs were too high. He said the council had stripped out many of the costs and was availing of opportunities to use a variety of building technologies. The council was keen to look to do that, including having system-based housing being manufactured off site for the council outside of Dublin. *“Nobody has to get up and drive to Dublin. We need to look at those technologies and give the opportunity to the hinterland to provide a factory-production model to bring forward this type of building technology.”*

***“We’re proposing to do that in the city – we will have 150 rapid build homes in the coming weeks; we are proposing to bring another 1,000 units onto urban sites in specific areas; we have two pilots in relation to system-built housing. If we crack the nut on that one, we feel we are in a really good place to provide affordable homes.”***

Referring to Ó Cualann, a housing co-operative in Ballymun north Dublin city, he said the initiative had been successful because the council had given the co-operative a serviced site at nominal cost. As a result, three-bedroom homes would be made available for €150,000 or €160,000.

**Dr Dáithí Downey, Head of Housing Policy, Research and Development, Dublin City Council,** said Dublin was gearing up for a housing development cycle while costs are very high in terms of productive factors, land and labour. It was the emphasis on price that seemed to determine affordability.

There were very significant issues in terms of affordability that cannot be overlooked, including quality, standards and location. It was necessary, he said, to redress and address acute unmet housing need in Dublin.

***“We are dealing with massive legacy issues here – we cannot underestimate the debt burden that sits on owner-occupation and how that has squeezed out households, through vacant possession, to tenancies that are not secure and is leading to the growth in presentations to homeless services.”***

*“A huge number of people are at risk of being left behind in the current narrative. The local authority has a statutory responsibility in the housing of households with acute needs, and that is where we are starting. We have an opportunity to look into that mid-distance and to do something more significant. We are looking closely at how vacancy can be tackled in the city. We need to know a lot more about the geography of the vacancy in the city. We don’t have a register of ownership, or the detail on whether vacant properties are derelict or just unoccupied.”* He said it was necessary to act quickly on identifying the owners and use of those properties.

He said unused commercial and retail space in the city could be converted to residential use. A secure and affordable rental market was needed. He said a universal housing allowance that would support private and public tenants would be a very interesting way of refinancing a unitary rental.

***“A significant opportunity exists to adapt a counter cyclical approach to providing housing.”***

**Ali Grehan, City Architect, Dublin City Council**, said it was necessary to invest in quality as well as quantity, and that required stewardship, allowing local authorities and others to monitor construction. The city did not seem to be able to learn from mistakes, she said, referring to the decision to connect the two LUAS lines 15 or 20 years after they had first gone into service.

While she agreed that public procurement was *“there for good reason – how we raise money needs to be completely transparent; how we award contracts needs to be completely transparent”*, she said the public procurement model meant the council could not build up relationships with good builders/developers. It is therefore very difficult to proceed in a partnership mode.

A private developer does not have to offer the opportunity to every developer in the market and accept the lowest price. That was what the public sector had to do.

***“And then the battle starts. Instead of being able to seek the appropriate developer for the job we have to put it out to the market and cross our fingers and do battle throughout the construction process. That is one reason why construction costs so much – because it is not designed to be a partnership.”***

She said apartments should be built not just as starter homes but as homes where somebody would want to live for all of their life. *“We should approach apartment design with that in mind, and I think we would make progress changing hearts and minds, and convincing people that apartment living is the future.”*

## Chapter Three: Movement and Transport



Photo 5: Dublin City Council Chambers, City Hall

**Mr. Hugh Cregan, Director of Transport Investment and Taxi Regulation, Deputy Chief Executive, National Transport Authority,** said Dublin's congestion problem was the outcome of chronic underinvestment in public transport over more than a decade. Though the reasons for the underinvestment were understandable, congestion was still the outcome, he added.

***“We see it as the next big problem to solve after the housing issue. The big-ticket items like Metro North and the DART expansion have to be built, but they are a decade away. The region cannot wait that long.”***

Investment in transforming the bus system, and people's attitude towards the bus system, was the key to solving the city's congestion woes over the next number of years. To do this, additional funding was required, which in turn required what he referred to as, *“buyer support”*. He said it was relatively easy to get people to support a big project like Metro North, but much more difficult to get funders to support the bus system. *“This is what we need to do. The bus system serves 125 million people a year. If we are to deal with congestion and prevent it from becoming a brake on economic growth, there has to be investment in the bus system.”*

**Mr. Eamon O'Reilly, Chief Executive Officer, Dublin Port,** said the port had seen growth of 25 per cent in four years, which he compared with the earlier figure of 25 per cent growth for office space in five years. *"This puts us 30 per cent ahead of where we were in 2007."* He said there as a very major development plan within the port, *"and we can finance it"* through a number of funding options, including local borrowing.

While he agreed that the planning system was slow, he said it was not an obstacle to the port's development because "we start early, it is as simple as that. *"We know it is going to be slow; we don't wait; we plan early."* In that respect, he said port development was planned up to 2040 to deliver the capacity needed, and to help and city and the economy."

Public transport played a very important role in the port's development by taking a large volume of traffic off the roads and allowing the national roads network, particularly the port tunnel, to function better. Conceding that the port was *"not very attractive"*, he said there was a lot of work going on in the port area adding to the amenities available locally. He spoke of the diving bell in John Rogerson's Quay, which has become a tourist attraction. On East Wall Road a pedestrian and garden project was unfolding to be finished by September, which will add considerably to the public realm in a very austere area of the city. In September we start work on a 4km cycle track on the northside of the port over in the Tolka Estuary."

The main problem faced by the port was people forgetting the importance of the port. *"A past government suggested the port be moved – lock, stock and barrel – somewhere north of Dublin: economic madness and environmentally unsustainable. It didn't happen. The notion did find its way into the previous development plan and has thankfully been removed in the most recent one."*

**"We don't need to undermine the good planning that has been done in past investments in terms of favouring short term gains."**

The port faced a specific problem in the Poolbeg Strategic Development Zone, he said. *“As recently as last Thursday, councillors tried [unsuccessfully] to get a motion through to specifically zone port land for one particular project, film studios, down to the detail of eight sound stages.”* He called for recognition that *“port infrastructure is important, there is a plan in place, and finance is in place to deliver it. Things shouldn’t get in the way of delivering the infrastructure – it is not very attractive, it is not well understood but it is a lynchpin of our economy.”*

**Ms. Deirdre Lavin, Economist Group Strategy, Dublin Airport Authority**, said the airport was experiencing record numbers of passengers. *“We are delighted but that brings its own problems, and we constantly have to work on the infrastructure”* associated with Dublin Airport. She said it was important to emphasise how valuable the airports were, *“particularly Dublin Airport, as a gateway” not just for Dublin but the rest of the country.*

A recent economic impact assessment of Dublin Airport highlighted that 15,000 people are employed on site *“and that our contribution in the local economy is far higher”*, - equivalent to about 4 per cent of GDP. So you cannot over emphasise the importance of Dublin Airport and the need to ensure its long-term health and development.” Her colleague Mark Killion said it was necessary to recognise the role of the airport as an economic driver for Ireland.

**Mr. Benny Cullen, of Waterways Ireland**, told the summit that Dublin’s incredible maritime and waterways heritage is being completely under used He said at the turn of the 20th century, transport was focused around the city’s waterways, which included the rivers Liffey, Tolka and Dodder, the Grand and Royal canals, as well as Grand Canal Dock, Spencer Dock, George’s Dock and Alexander Basin in Dublin Port. *“They all meet in the Liffey Estuary and flow out into Dublin Bay”.*

He said he was not suggesting going back to transporting everything by boat, but waterways were *“now totally under-utilised by the city”* as transport, recreational and leisure infrastructure, and as tourist attractions for the city.

**Dublin’s incredible maritime and waterways heritage is being completely under used**

**“What is interesting about this infrastructure is that it is 95 per cent is off road, so we are not talking about displacing existing transport.”**

He said Waterways Ireland saw great potential use for these waterways – and not all of it on the water but by also getting people onto bicycles along the Grand Canal cycleway, which he said was “probably the best piece of cycling infrastructure in the country. We have a million trips down the Grand Canal, either by foot or by bicycle.

“We are working on two loops within the city – an inner city cycle loop that would follow the Royal Canal as far as Ashtown, through the

Phoenix Park to Memorial Park and back along the Grand Canal into Grand Canal Dock.

He told those present of a 15-second video clip on Grand Canal at 8.45am on a Monday, which showed 115 people on bikes travelling through a junction in 15 seconds. He said 10 cars got through the same junction in 45 seconds at the same time of day.

He said the potential to move more people through the city should be capitalised on. He said Waterways Ireland was very keen to see this happen on the Grand and Royal canals. He said an outer loop reached out as far as Lucan. “What is interesting about this infrastructure is that it is 95 per cent off road so we are not talking about displacing existing transport.”

**Ms. Joanne Grant, Managing Director of JCDecaux Ireland, Dublin Bikes,** said the initiative had been very successful and very well received in the city. There were an average of 15,000 users a day, and 68,000 long-term members. She said 96 per cent of all journeys were free. *“We have put a very good quality system in place.”* She said to date Dublin Bikes was cost – neutral, being funded by advertising, sponsorship, subscription and by the National Transport Authority.

Looking to the future she said she felt public transport for the city needed to become more coherent. *“I do think the bike scheme can play a part in that.”* This was sometimes forgotten because a private company ran the service. She asked that the

complications a private company experiences in regulating, maintaining and looking after the scheme be considered in transport plans for the city.

*“While the bikes are flying around the city at 17km/h, our vehicles are sitting in traffic, which is not good for the people that arrive at the bike station to find it is either full or empty because we cannot get there on time.”*

## Chapter Four: Delivering Infrastructure



Photo 6: Dr. Deiric Ó Broin CEO NorDubCo address the Summit on the challenges of delivering Infrastructure for Dublin City

**Dr. Deiric Ó Broin, Chief Executive Officer, NorDubCo. And Lecturer in Dublin City University** said there is an unhealthy interaction between, what he called, the three I's – interest, institution, ideology – and this was the greatest challenge facing Dublin. The components of a healthy relationship between these included robust public institutions capable of making evidence-based decisions and having the capacity to inform the decision-making process. He said in the last 10 years there had been a withering of capacity in a number of the public institutions, and there was now real need to invest in capacity in those institutions.

In the same time period, particular vested interests were able to intervene in a policy decision, with very negative public consequences. *“So recognising and being clear*



*about the role and appropriate extent of private vested interests, and their intervention and involvement in public policy decisions, is absolutely vital.” It was necessary to be very clear about the influence of ideology on how institutions function – on ideological positions on whether a service should be a market - based service, or a publically owned and delivered service.*

***“I have a concern that the legitimacy and credibility of many public Irish institutions is not only problematic but contestable, by which I mean there is widespread public apathy and the wilful ignoring of public decision-making processes. That is going to get worse unless we do something about it.”***

Recent local and regional local government reform taken in conjunction with the way the State has re-orientated its planning and development process, and changes in political culture, were a very significant change in the way in which the local state in Ireland interacts with citizens and civil society.

*“The success – the public acceptance – of our new and existing public institutions and, more importantly, their plans, strategies and decisions depends on input and output legitimacy. By input legitimacy I talk about the functioning and machinery of an institution, how its members are selected or elected, procedure by which decisions are made, and the power that it exercises.*

***“Being clear about the role and appropriate extent of private vested interests, and their intervention and involvement in public policy decisions, is absolutely vital.”***

*Output legitimacy, I am talking about the public assessment of the relevance and quality of an infrastructure reform. They are huge challenges facing the city region and its public institutions.”*

*“At one level you might ask what any of this has to do with building the next Luas line or Metro North or the DART interconnector or the Super M50.” He said it was important because of a significant undermining of public confidence in public institutions. It appears to be an ongoing process with no end in sight.” That was the*

context for some of the challenges facing the Dublin city region. *“If we are to invest and deliver the infrastructure necessary to maintain the city region’s competitiveness, whether it is housing or transport infrastructure, we also want to maintain the relatively attractive sense of place that Dublin has.”*

*“Infrastructure deficits required billions in investment, if not tens of billions, whether delivered by public, public-private or private financing arrangement. He said those making the decisions would be faced with the most questioning citizenry they had ever faced, and the legitimacy of their decisions would be examined in minute detail more than had ever happened in the history of the State. “I am not sure we are wired for that yet.”*

A key issue was how removed the public was from many of the decisions taken. *“If you look at the recent development of the incinerator in Dublin – an initiative that by and large would be mainstream in any western European city in Dublin it proved hugely costly and problematic. How can we avoid similar situations in the future? Who will be meaningfully accountable for decisions? How can what is widely regarded as an unclear system be made more transparent and meaningful to citizens in the city region? We live in a changed time and what we managed to get away with in the past is probably no longer sufficient. “*

Dr Ó Brion said he was concerned this had not been taken into account. *“We recognise that money needs to be spent, we acknowledge we may have to be nimble in how we access funding, but who is responsible to the citizens for the spending of that money. Where investment in infrastructure is seen to be paying off, the perception this has been a worthwhile investment that helps to make the city a better place.”*

He said promoters of such very large projects were sometimes self-serving, misinforming the public, the media and public representatives to get the project built. The formula for approval seemed to be an unhealthy cocktail of underestimated costs, overestimated revenue, undervalued environmental impacts and overvalued economic development impacts.

*“While I am not suggesting this is the case in Ireland, I think it is vital we are aware of the fluidity of public perceptions of success and how these might differ from the metrics of success that public institutions use.*

Referring to the idea put forward for providing apartments for families, he said, *“culture trumps strategy every time. We have a dominant political and social culture in this country – we buy houses. You are talking about asking people to change the most central habit of their life to deliver what you perceive to be a healthy outcome – apartments. I am not sure we are set up to communicate the scale of the need for that change to the public.*

**Linda Doyle, Director, Connect Centre Trinity College Dublin** addressed the summit about how technology could address some of the issues of the city and the development of the Smart City. She said technology played a role in all aspects of the city’s life from the working of Dublin Port to running the bus service.

***“It is impossible to think of any infrastructure now, including housing, without thinking about the technology, and the digital layer that sits on top of it. You need to think of digital networks in everything.”***

She said density was an issue for connectivity – what she referred to as *“the massive internet of things”*. She said this was very important in considering future communications for the city. She said an asset registry should be established to ascertain the extent of assets that could be used to expand and deepen that connectivity into the future.

She suggested that *“we embed our environment with sensors everywhere and anywhere right around the city...on lampposts, walls, benches, in buses and cars.”* She said the

***“I maintain my optimism that Dublin can get it right, but if we want to tackle these issues, we have to acknowledge they exist in the first place.”***

dense deployment of sensors, and ultra dense networks, is all about future communications systems.

***“The networks we have in the city now are not fit for purpose for the future – for virtual reality, augmented reality, that might overlay the city and help with any of these problems, we need that denser deployment.”***

She said such deployment was difficult “for all of the reasons everyone mentioned – there are many different authorities involved in everything, planning permission is sluggish and slow, nobody really realises the benefit – why should I give up my lamppost? This frustration feeds into the digital structure in the same way.” She said this was a difficult for every city and suggested that if Dublin could solve this problem it would have a blue print for IP that could be exported to other cities. We need to look at new ways of planning that involve technology like artificial intelligence and learning and where you can do automated plans. A lot of the process can be automated and then the human intervention, which is also really important, can complement it.

***”People will be able to interact with the city in a way that is more comfortable, right down to the level of how we plan, how we use technology to do the planning and deal with the fragmentation”***

She referred to a recent pilot mobile taskforce looking at how we could improve the network, which looked at the planning that underpinned it. She said there were a number of models in Dublin and suggested putting “out calls to see if people could do planning in new ways using technology and artificial intelligence. She suggested a role for Blockchain, the distributive ledge that underpins the online currency, Bitcoin.

An issue would be managing digital assets in a distributive fashion but she said there was a lot of data from the United Kingdom on its use in government. “We have an

opportunity to look at things like that”. She said technology was not the whole solution but “it can be a very significant part. “Some of the frustration that was vented here can be taken away by certain technologies. Once we have the amazing networks the city will be smarter and we will have no congestion. She said €60 million was being invested in ongoing research in Ireland on future networks, communications and telecom projects.

**Gerry Wardell, Director, Codema,** the Dublin energy agency, said and the issue of climate change and how Dublin is

going to address the huge global issue of climate change. He said Dublin would not become a modern city without considering these. He said apart from comments made by Professor Fitzgerald at the start of the summit, the issue had not been discussed. *“It should underpin any future development, and I know local authorities are doing a lot in terms of looking at district heating, renewable energy, and climate strategies. I feel obliged to mention that.”*

Mr. Paul Horan told the summit that a problem with school places had been responded to by government in 2012 with a school-building programme. School places were provided through a mixture of public and private initiatives including PPPs, rapid build, refurbishment, but quietly over five years 100,000 school places have been delivered.

He said this happened because it became an absolute priority of the Government to solve that problem, and *“they decided to put money into it – about €2bn was set aside, and the Department delivered”*. He said he had no doubt if the NTA was given €2 billion; it would *“have the metro running in about two years”*. He said underinvestment was a problem – that 2 per cent of GDP was being? Rather than the necessary 4 per cent. *“It is down to picking the key projects, deciding what we want to do and investing in those, rather than trying to pull 45 projects along in 45 years.”*

**“It would be remiss in terms of developing a modern world class city, not to consider the long-term future of the energy infrastructure”**

**Declan Wallace, Assistant Chief Executive for Culture Recreation and Economic Services (CRES), Dublin City Council**, said density was at the heart of all Dublin's issues – and would deal with traffic, housing problems and other public realm issues. In terms of convincing the public of the need for increased height and increased density he felt we had we had not succeeded. He said elected members are sometimes blamed but they are simply representing the views of their constituents.

He said apartment living was associated with historic problems in developments such as Ballymun. These were followed by some “shoebox” type developments, built in the early 1980s. He was concerned that some speakers were advocating the building of more of these to solve the current supply problems. It needs a culture change to convince people of the merits of apartment living and the only way to achieve this is to build decent apartments with the living space suitable for families as well as for one person. *“We do need to get a good supply of decent sized, decent quality*

**“We need to make Dublin an Irish capital city, not a copy of Barcelona, Copenhagen or Paris.”**

*apartments. I think that is one of the issues we have.”* He said the council was always keen to improve Dublin – but he felt we have our own culture and our own individual attributes”

He said continental capital cities were built generally with five-storey buildings from day one. *“Dublin is not like that and is a medieval city at its core. Its outer city area is made up of a huge number of two-storey semi-detached dwellings.”* Until we grasp the nettle and convince people that it is only by building good quality, well managed apartments that we can justify and provide the capital investment in the public realm and transport infrastructure to deal with congestion and quality environment.

He went on to agree with Ali Grehan in relation to her comment on the negative impacts of the public procurement process.” On a lighter note, he said very few organisations would ask *“people to come in to have a go at them”*. He said that was what the council had done in holding the summit. *“It has been very useful and I thank all who participated.”*

In his closing comments, **Greg Swift, Head of Enterprise and Economic Development, Dublin City Council**, said the summit had been very useful to help identify the gaps and issues “*we are facing to develop this city*”. He said following the event, his office would categorise the issues that had arisen and been discussed throughout the morning, and consider further research. Mr. Swift offered his sincere thanks to everyone for attending and taking part in the Dublin City Infrastructure Summit.

## Contributors:

1. [Councillor Paul McAuliffe](#), Infrastructure Chair, and Chair of the Economic Development, Enterprise and International Relations, Strategic Policy Committee
2. [Professor John Fitzgerald](#), Department of Economics, Trinity College, Dublin
3. [Ms Mary Rose Burke](#), Chief Executive of Dublin Chamber
4. [Mr Tom Parlon](#), Chief Executive of the Construction Industry Federation
5. [Mr Aidan Sweeney](#), Senior Policy Executive, IBEC
6. [Senator Neal Richmond](#), chairman of the Seanad Brexit Committee
7. [Councillor Ciaran Cuffe](#), Green Party
8. [Councillor Dermot Lacey](#), Labour Party
9. [Ms Lorraine Higgins](#), Head of Public Affairs and Communication, Retail Excellence Ireland
10. [Dr Ronan Lyons](#), Department of Economics, Trinity College Dublin
11. [Mr Anthony Flynn](#), Executive Manager, Housing and Community Section, Dublin City Council,
12. [Dr Dáithí Downey](#), Head of Housing Policy, Research and Development, Dublin City Council
13. [Ms Ali Grehan](#), City Architect, Dublin City Council
14. [Mr Hugh Creegan](#), Director of Transport Investment and Taxi Regulation, Deputy Chief Executive, National Transport Authority
15. [Mr Eamonn O'Reilly](#), Chief Executive, Dublin Port
16. [Ms Deirdre Lavin](#), Economist, Group Strategy, Dublin Airport Authority
17. [Mr Benny Cullen](#), of Waterways Ireland
18. [Ms Joanne Grant](#), Managing Director of JC Decaux Ireland, Dublin Bikes,
19. [Dr Deiric Ó Broin](#), Chief Executive Officer, NorDub Co and lecturer at Dublin City University
20. [Ms Linda Doyle](#), Director, Connect Centre,
21. [Mr Gerry Wardell](#), Director, Codema,
22. [Mr Declan Wallace](#), Assistant City Manager for Culture, Recreation and Economic Development, Dublin City Council
23. [Mr Greg Swift](#), Head of Enterprise and Economic Development, Dublin City Council,